

# THE BOY TODAY



MATHER ALMON ABBOTT









THE BOY TODAY



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*To those I love and those who love me—*

*To those I love and who do not love me—*

**MY BOYS**

*I dedicate this little Book.*



## FOREWORD

THE following pages are an attempt of a Head Master to tell the truth as he sees it. The only excuse that he has for writing these pages is that for thirty-four years he has been in close contact with the American boy. Nineteen years spent as assistant master in one of the greater schools of New England; five years as a professor at Yale University where, also, as an avocation, he coached the Freshman and Varsity crews; and finally, ten years' service as Head Master of one of the largest preparatory schools of America, have given him, perhaps, an insight into the workings of the boy mind which justifies this attempt to portray the modern American Boy. He makes no apology for the fact that his opinions

## FOREWORD

will clash with those of the majority. He writes from his heart, because he believes that the great dangers that beset this great nation, can be met and mastered in its schools. He agrees fully with Herman Hagedorn, that the youth of America are the hope of the world.

M. A. A.

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Lawrenceville, N. J.*



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## THE BOY TODAY



## LOOKING ON

THERE ARE two ways of looking at The Boy, just as there are two ways of looking at everything. Yet with him it is of the greatest moment how we look at him. An evil thing to be made good? A necessary evil born in sin and conceived in iniquity? That is one way of looking at him. Therefore we have a long list of restraining punishments, coercions, resentments, hatreds, cruelties, hazing, bullying, deceptions, slyness, insincerities, wickedness. Therefore we have a sharp line drawn between the teacher and him; a desire on his part to "put something over," a desire on the teacher's part, sometimes, to "get even"; a war in miniature. "That's how I get



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my revenge," I once heard a great teacher of a famous school say, in describing some cunningly devised punishment. Revenge on a boy!

It makes such a difference how one looks at him. Not only how the teacher looks, but also, much more important, how the parent looks at him. There are, nowadays, so many different kinds of parents. Material success has brought to pass such a depth of selfishness.

What is he, a toy to play with? A toy, to be handed over to others when he has ceased to be interesting, or becomes tiresome? What is he? A result of certain actions and therefore a necessary evil? An evil to be endured and put up with and indulged to keep him quiet, perhaps, until he can be sent to school to be corrected by others, when his character has been so spoiled at home

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that correction is sometimes almost impossible?

What is he? A living danger to be always coerced with severity and restraint, until, in self-defence, he becomes hypocritical and underhanded? What is he? One's own, to be made a servant, sometimes almost a slave of the household, until his heart seethes with rebellion ill-suppressed?

What is he? Well, I know what he is and, thank God, even in this mechanical and machine-made world of ours, there are many mothers and fathers who also know what he is. Dare I say what he is? Dare I say it? For to say it is to be laughed at in this psychological, psychoanalytic, behaviouristic, undigested-scientific, atheistic, materialistic, mechanistic world of ours. Well, here goes, and this brings me to the other way of looking at him. For I believe,

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nay, I know, that he is not yours, nor ours, nor his parents', but a son of God.

Now, you worldling, don't shut up this little book and throw it away! I have something I want to say to you. What do you know of the mystery of life? What do you really know of the very mysterious being that you yourself are? A little science, a great materially successful nation, tremendous material power have driven you and me and others to mental indigestion. We have so magnified the flesh and blood side of us, the sensual enjoyment side of us, the mental, material accomplishment side of us, that we have trodden down under foot and tried to forget the mystical, spiritual side of us. Therefore our children are to us but products of our fleshly selves; material beings constructed of material minds or, mostly, of material bodies. The mystic, the spiritual side

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of us, we do not cultivate. We shy away from thoughts of "the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness"; this world with its joys and pleasures, aye, even with its sorrows and its hardships, has become to us the only reality. But what do we know of the mystery that is ourselves? What do we know of the mystery that our children are?

One who never lied is reported to have said, "Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven." There is just a chance, you know, in spite of the children of this world, there is just a chance that this saying might be true. If true, then how different everything becomes! Yes, and those boys we call our own, what of them? Tied to us by the flesh, yes, but what of the real thing, that is the mystery. Rather a terrific mystery, perhaps! "Woe to the world because of

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offences. For it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. It were better for him that a millstone were tied about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones." What have we done for our children? Our children, or perhaps, just perhaps, you know, His children,—what have we done for them? What examples have we set them? Look around, please, and see! Look and see! Read and see! Youth is, above all things, imitative.

Two ways of looking at him: One, as conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity; the other, as a son of God. And it makes such a difference, if you only knew it, it makes such a difference how we look on.

## BEING LOOKED AT

### BEING LOOKED AT

“WHAT do they think?” “What will they think?” Two great fears that beset mankind. Good fears, too, for they sometimes restrain the otherwise unrestrainable. It is an astonishing fact that while many of us parents are quite aware of the fact that, as far as our little world is concerned, we are being looked at and therefore behave ourselves accordingly, some of us appear blissfully heedless of those eyes which are ever on us, heedless of the fact that, to our children, what we are and what we do are of such importance, that looking at us is a most necessary business.

Those watchful eyes and listening ears are ever directed our way. Sometimes loving, sometimes fearful, sometimes happy, sometimes alarmed and

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sometimes disappointed, those eyes look at us and what we do. Very little escapes them. To use their own phrase, they "size us up." Then they act accordingly. As I said before, youth is above all things imitative. What right then have we to criticize and declaim against the modern generation? After all, that boy of ours is influenced more than we can ever tell by the things that he knows we do, and by the things he hears us say. And *he knows the things we do*. We may deceive others, but we are living in a fool's paradise if we think we can hoodwink him. Moreover, this generation of boys believes that what is right for us to do is also right for them.

"Abominable," comes the protest, "why, certain things are all right for a grown man, which are, of course, impossible for a boy to do." Really? Are they? Well, say what we may, he does



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not so believe! Nor can we convince him so to believe. Moreover, if we try to prevent him from doing the things we do, he will do them all the same. The only way to stop him is *not to do them ourselves*. There's a blow for us.

A Head Master once had to dismiss a boy for stealing. There was no reason for the theft. The boy was the son of a rich man, but he stole twenty dollars and gave it to a friend in payment of a bet. His parents came to see the Head Master, crestfallen, dumbfounded, and overwhelmed with grief. Grief for what, for the boy? Not at all. There was only anger in their hearts for the boy. Their grief was for what the world might say. But this is what the Head Master said: "I just want to ask you two people one thing? Who took that money?"

"What do you mean?" cried the tear-

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ful mother. "You just called us here because you said our boy took this money."

"Yes," replied the Head Master, "your boy's hand took the money, but listen to me: Ever since he was a youngster he has watched you, been with you, and, while he amused you, played with you. Gambled with you, has he not? Moreover, if I am not mistaken, you have let him know that a gambling debt is a debt of honour amongst gentlemen, and must be paid immediately, no matter what the circumstances."

"Certainly," said the father, "I so believe and have taught him so."

"Well," said the Head Master, "he learned to gamble from you and with you. He made a bet last week. He lost. He was dunned for the money. He didn't have it at the moment. It was a debt of honour and must be paid

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immediately. So I ask you, who took that money? You two or he?"

Now, my dear reader, "How about that bootlegger of yours?" Remember, you are being looked at.

A splendid boy once said to me, "You know, while the fathers drink the boys will drink. While the fathers go down town the boys will go down town. And so forth. Why can't they realize that what is good for them is good for us!"

We are being looked at! There is a Parents League, and I admire it immensely. It does good work and is a move in the right direction. But it does not go far enough. Before the holidays it publishes the names of the plays and musical shows that are fit for the children coming home from school to see! If there were parental control, splendid. But there is little parental control and the net result of this publishing is that

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the *other* plays are what the children go to see! We are being looked at. If a play is good enough for us, he claims it is also good enough for him. Why have these plays at all? If they must be, why go to see them? That's a question for us parents to answer.

We are being looked at! That clever business deal, of which we were so proud we could not refrain from mentioning it. Perhaps it was a bit crooked, but nevertheless, we won. "More money for all of us," and so on and so forth, day after day. We are being looked at.

That family life. Not much of it nowadays. But such as it is! "How can you tell us that God is love," said a boy to me once, "when my father and mother—" and he burst into tears. Did you ever think how supremely selfish are divorce and separation? Did you see what I see, hear what I hear, when his heart

## WHAT HE IS UP AGAINST

is breaking? But what of him? Out upon the modern generation! We are being looked at. "It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man. . . ."

## WHAT HE HIMSELF IS UP AGAINST

WHAT is he up against? I wonder how many of us think of that? The other day I asked one of the famous college deans, "How do you think that you and I at the age of eighteen would have stood up against the temptations, etc., that our boys have to meet?" His reply was enlightening. "It is just that," said he, "it is just that which makes me so tender with them!" Just that! Will you come back with me in thought, to how you felt at eighteen? Then place

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yourself in remembrance at that age, while you consider modern conditions, while you consider what I am going to write about.

First and foremost, his is, at present, a Godless world. Yes, in spite of the fact that there are churches galore, as far as he is concerned it is a Godless world. If the old wise man is true in saying that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," then there is no wisdom so far as the Boy is concerned, because he has no fear of the Lord. He fears not God nor devil. Now a wholesome "fear of the Lord" is a good thing for everybody, and is, to a certain extent, a restraining influence. But if from your babyhood you hear little about the Lord from your parents, and except for an occasional visit to a church, your Sundays, following the example of your parents, and often with them, are spent as

## WHAT HE IS UP AGAINST

a glorious holiday. There is precious little chance for the Lord to get into your consciousness. I remember, when just out of babyhood, a fireside, an armchair and a mother's arm around me. I remember the dear old stories and Love almost personified. I got to know a loving Father not of this world. In times of stress, when needed, the old stories stood firm and helped make a man, though the tongue that told the tales had long gone to its rest. Did he have any of that? Does he have any of that? Not he, no, not he. The bright night lights! The love of enjoyment! Selfishness! The apartment! The automobile! Sometimes the other man! And so on. Yes, his is a Godless world. Simply because he has not been taught about his spiritual side. It is the earth earthy, that he learns about. Worldly success, money, always money, to a certain ex-



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tent these become his gods. To a certain extent only, thank God. We'll talk about this later when we come to religion. But here we are talking about what he is up against, and first and foremost I claim that his is a Godless world.

Secondly, and only second in importance, his is a selfish world. If he is born in good circumstances, from the moment he can think, everything he wants is showered upon him; not what he needs, mind you, but what he wants. Rather a gruesome idea of affection. Sometimes affection is made the excuse for indulgence, whereas in reality it is either the inability to say No, or the pleasurable thrill to be able to give lavishly, or still worse, the fear of a long argument and noise.

I once had a boy whose father surreptitiously sent him \$500.00 a month. When I discovered this crime, I wrote

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and told the parent that unless he stopped sending this money at once, I should immediately send the boy home. The reply came back that I was quite right, but would I not please tell the boy that I had stopped the supply of money. "Because," said the parent, "if I write and stop sending this amount *I am afraid I shall lose his affection!*" Is it any wonder he is selfish! How could he be otherwise and yet—but we shall come to that later. Still and secondly, I contend that his is a selfish world.

Thirdly, his is a sensual world! Run your eye over today's movie headlines in the morning paper. "Her Unborn Child," "His Other Wife," etc., etc. Go to our legitimate stage and what do you find? You know. What sort of literature is flung at him? You know. What sort of dance have we evolved? You know. Need I go further? Mud every-

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where, is there not? And yet—well, I leave that also till later, but thirdly, I call to your attention that his is a sensual world!

Fourthly: His is a bootlegging world. Such a self-evident fact needs no proof. But we shall also take this up later, when we talk of Prohibition.

Fifthly: His is an automobile world. "What is the harm in that?" you ask. The automobile in itself is harmless, perhaps, I answer, but taken with my thirdly and my fourthly, an automobile, a girl, a flask! Well, his is an automobile world.

Sixth: His is a world in which parental control has well nigh vanished. Home has become a place to sleep in and sometimes to eat in! How can it be otherwise when some parents also use home as merely for such a purpose? A Godless world, and a world without pa-

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rental control, a world where no one says "No!" That's the world he lives in.

Seventh: His is a hard-boiled world. Courtesy seems to have vanished. The equality of the sexes, so-called, for they can never be equal, has caused the disappearance of chivalry. A boldly outspoken age, which boasts itself in calling a spade, a spade. A cynical looking at all things which would be amusing if it were not so pitiful. Gentleness and comely beauty have disappeared beneath exposure and cosmetics. This age rejoices in nakedness both of body and expressions. Sophistication has taken the place of quiet modesty, and boldness and profanity have supplanted the gentle and the elegant. His is a hard-boiled age and yet is he really hard-boiled?

Lastly, his is a law-breaking world, where sometimes it seems as if the only

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law that people try to keep is "Thou shalt not be caught!" "Thou shalt not be found out!" And yet—

But let us put ourselves back at sixteen or seventeen or eighteen or twenty and sum up, and find how we should stand up against:

1. A Godless world;
2. A selfish world;
3. A sensual world;
4. A bootlegging world;
5. An automobile world;
6. A world without parental control;
7. A hard-boiled world;
8. A law-breaking world.

Then having decided truthfully, I ask you, have you or I or any other man the right to blame or declaim against this modern generation? For after all, whose fault is it that all this has come to pass? Who has given up God? Who has brought in a selfishness greater than

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the world has ever seen? Who allows the movies, the theatres, the books, the magazines, comic and otherwise, to throw their indecent suggestions broadcast? Who has brought the bootlegger? Who is unable to say "No?" Who has allowed law-breaking to flourish? The modern generation, or you and I? Which?

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FIRST and foremost, how does he stand up in a Godless world? Never in history, I believe, has the existence of a dual personality in man been so evident. At one time one thinks that he is about as splendid as a boy can be, a moment later the onlooker, thunder-struck and disappointed, sees the clouds gather,

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and is filled almost with disgust at his actions. I once knew a boy seemingly hard, and almost vicious, there appeared to be no spiritual nature within, and yet one day in a side street in a nearby town he ran across a mother severely beating a child. In a second he had seized the baby from its mother's arms. Then in no mistaken tones he gave the woman a lecture on motherhood till she, picking up the child, ran off abashed and ashamed. One feels this duality all the time one associates with him. A grand unselfish action will move him to the verge of tears, and next moment selfishness itself reigns within him.

Now, as we have said above, we live in a scientific and mechanical age. He is brought up in the knowledge of certain so-called facts. Undigested knowledge, if you will, but he will accept nothing on hearsay. He must have every-



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thing proved to his satisfaction. Not always does he look into the truth of the facts, but he must have things proved, I say again, to his satisfaction. A familiar story will illustrate: A boy of six woke up one Christmas morning to find his mother and father hanging up a filled stocking in the fireplace where, the night before, he had hung up an empty one. Later he said to his nurse, "So there is no Santa Claus! Now, I would like to know the truth about Jesus." The spiritual side of him is hungry for he really knows not what. He is restless, therefore, and unhappy at times about himself.

Then into this Godless world comes the material thrill; he is tempted, and for a time the pursuit of joys material take full control of him; then again restless and uncomfortable, for in boyhood of the right sort the spiritual hun-

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ger will not be downed, he delves into thoughts and things unprovable by material science, and wonders about Truth and God. The fight is not long, for the world to him is thrilling. But he cannot overcome his restlessness. I rejoice in his restlessness,—though to some it seems almost horrible,—I rejoice in his restlessness, for I know its cause. He is a lover of fact. In this age of so-called facts, how could it be otherwise? He knows that his forbears have been utterly mistaken somewhere. He looks out on so-called Christianity, which is at present all theory and little action, and laughs. Proof is what he wants. He sees so-called Christians going to church on Sundays and grabbing all they can for themselves through the week, and again he laughs. Or he sees them acting in the approved hypocritical manner, and again he laughs. If God is

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God, He has to be of some use. Let God show Himself in people, and youth will believe in a fact! Fairy tales are all very well in their way, but one cannot live on fairy tales. It matters little to him that one can believe with all one's soul in a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." It matters not to him that one can try with all one's might to get across the fact of a spiritual existence, apart from the material, even in this plane of existence. He has been so often deceived and fooled that he has become wary.

Is he then without what we call God? To a certain degree, Yes; but for the most part, No. Although the world does not notice it, the sorrows and trials of Youth are much more poignant and destructive than those of age. He feels the need and the want of a power outside himself that will help. But *he will*

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*find out for himself.* That is the great hope. The hope that he will find out for himself. We have been fed with fairy tales which, in after life, we have not been men enough to acknowledge as false. We have let lies stand because we have believed that it was better for the masses to believe in a false God than no God at all. There has come a generation which has "called our bluff!" A generation which sees that we have failed. A generation who have deep spiritual longings and are, therefore, unsatisfied and restless. Who at times want to seek after God "if haply they may find Him." But a generation who will find out for themselves, act for themselves. Our God is not their God and cannot be their God. When will religionists find out that one cannot force his God upon another, and that the only God worth having is the one which

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a man has found out for himself? Our boys, I believe, with all their faults, foolish mistakes, and selfishness, are on the way. Their restlessness shows it. Their dissatisfaction with life as it appears shows it. Even the prevalence of student suicide shows it, aye, even their hopelessness shows it, their hopelessness, which is so great at times that it leads to hope. The son must find the real Father some day. Why not, when the Father's arms are open?

### SECONDLY: HOW DOES HE STAND UP IN A SELFISH WORLD?

HE is supremely selfish. There is no doubt about that. How can he help it? It is a grabbing world. The well-to-do shower upon their children from the

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day that they are born everything that they ask, or nearly everything. The poor, lacking the good things that they see all around them, teach their offspring to grab when they can. When a nation openly and brazenly bows down and worships the almighty dollar, how could it be possible otherwise than that the children would be supremely selfish? The well-to-do, having from babyhood all that they want, cannot understand self-sacrifice. The poor, having nothing and wanting everything and therefore grabbing when they can, laugh at self-sacrifice. Yes, I confess he is supremely selfish. Whose fault is it, his? What has he been taught from his youth up? Worldly success, is it not? The power of money, is it not? Everything must be subordinated to the search for gold, which is supposed to give everything. And youth, with all its

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love of facts, has not yet found out that gold gives nothing. Nor have we? Well, if we have we won't confess it. How can we deny America's God?

He is supremely selfish and yet the eternal paradox of boyhood. A crowd of boys came roaring school hymns and songs out of a conference on the evening before a great game. They broke apart and went in little groups across a wide campus. Two jumped on their bicycles and sped along a narrow pathway. Unheard they struck into a small group. One of the walkers fell. The bicycle had gone over him. A bone in his leg broke, came out through the flesh, then went back again, causing poison. Infection set in and the greatest of all American surgeons, fortunately nearby at the time, was called in. There was no time to lose. To save the life the leg was amputated. After the boy came



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back to consciousness, the great man told him what had happened. Supremely selfish, eh? And yet this boy's first words were, "Please go at once and tell X that it was not his fault, I should have got out of his way!" Selfish? His first thought was for the other fellow. Never did I hear him say a word of sorrow for himself. Never did I hear him blame that careless boy.

A great hole had been made by a winter flood at the base of a river-dam thirty feet from the top thereof. A whirlpool at the surface sucked everything within its grasp down into the dam, which was made of two parts, the space between being four feet. A house party came to the old swimming place. They forgot the whirlpool. Two boys and a girl were drawn down and through the hole. The boys came to the top within the narrow place. One asked the other what

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about the girl. She was not there. Turning, the boy dove down into the seething water within. After the lapse of a minute he returned, breathless and bleeding. She was down there. Selfish, supremely selfish, eh? Sick and spent as he was, he dove again. When, two hours later, they had drained off the water, they found him caught down at the bottom, a few feet from the girl he had tried to save. "Greater love hath no man than this . . ." and yet, supremely selfish?

Yes, at times, but thank God, not all the time! Sometimes capable of the divine. "Sometimes" is too indefinite a word. Dare I say *always* capable of the divine?

In lighter vein: A great football game between two rival schools . . . not even you or I can understand the great devotion of modern youth to football he-

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rees, especially evident in preparatory schools. The great game was near its end and the score was even. A kick was blocked and the ball rolled across the goal line. Two of the attacking side outstripped the defenders of the goal line and ran for the ball. To fall on it meant a touchdown and untold glory for the boy who made it. One boy was in advance a foot or two. As they reached the ball, he stood still and let the other fall upon it! Selfish, perhaps, and yet!

You who believe that modern youth is supremely selfish should know something of one of the great obstructions to good school discipline, a thing called school boy honour. For it he will sacrifice himself and nearly all he has. He will face discipline of all kinds, aye, even expulsion, before he will involve another boy, whether friend or enemy. Woe be-

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tide that Head Master who disregards this unselfishness. And so I might go on telling tales of unselfish acts to the point of weariness, so multitudinous are they. Nevertheless, I agree that he is a paradox. At times so selfish as to be almost horrible, and again almost divine in his self-sacrifice.

Boyhood, boyhood! Two in one body, one flesh, and the other spirit eternally at war! Yes, and they have been at war since the beginning. Would to God I could tell you which I thought was winning in this so-called modern generation which seems so supremely selfish. One thing I know, that the most unselfish acts that I have seen have taken place during the last few years.

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### THIRDLY: HOW DOES HE STAND UP IN A SENSUAL WORLD?

SOMETIMES I sit and wonder and wonder how it has come about that we have fallen into the present state of lawlessness. It has come upon us slowly, a slip here, a slip there. A book here, a book there, a play now and then. The book paid great dividends, so did the play. A dance hall that paid, a night club that paid, a hostess that brought still greater dividends. A speakeasy that paid enormous dividends. Many speak-easies, still more speakeasies. Laws broken on all sides. Armoured cars in our streets. Murders in our streets. Narcotics in our streets. Political corruption in our streets. Police corruption in our streets. The crook in The Street able to get away with anything

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provided he has the money. "Thou shalt not get caught" the only law observed. If caught and the money ready, freedom gained! Woman's rights! The equality of the sexes! What is right for the one is right for the other! Birth control! The dissemination of knowledge of birth control! All this in a Godless world, a selfish world, necessarily brought to pass a sensual world!

We had been so unselfish. Do you remember, you who went through the War? We had been so unselfish. Fighting for an ideal we had given our sons, ourselves, our money. We had given lavishly. We promised those who went to die that their act should not be forgotten. That they would return, if return they did, to a better state of things. We really believed we could make a better world, a happier world. Our idealism evolved a vain hope of a brotherhood

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that would equalize the classes, and bring together labour and capital. And in our great unselfishness, we passed a law and made it a part of the Constitution of the United States. We went beyond ourselves. We hoped by one act to accomplish a change in human nature, to abolish an appetite. And what have we brought to pass? Look and see! Be honest: Look and see! Cease to be a hypocrite, look, find out and see!

They came back, those boys of ours did, and they wanted happiness, and they wanted "freedom," and they wanted all the joys of life they had lacked so long. Having risked their lives every day, the ordinary routine of life could not be endured. So we gave them pleasure, and we gave ourselves pleasure, and then we forgot all our ideals. Having gone beyond ourselves in our unselfishness, the pendulum swung the other way and we

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became supremely selfish. Seeking delight in the thrills of the flesh. Sense satisfaction gained its hold on us and our nation. God went out and the flesh came in. Into this mess, into this sensual world he comes. Into this world that we have made, he comes, God help him.

How does he stand up against these temptations? For never in history, I believe, has youth been under less restraint, never has youth been so tempted by the flesh. How does he stand up? It is rather difficult to answer. One thing, however, I can say, that never in my experience with boys,—and I have been teaching for thirty-four years,—have I had under me while they are at school, a cleaner, more upstanding or self-respecting number of young Americans. What they do at home during the holidays is practically unknown to me. For there is nothing more close-mouthed



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than the modern boy. In talking with other schoolmasters of the great schools of this country, I hear the same story,—splendid at school, but what of the holidays! A peculiar change. When I went to boarding school my parents were almost afraid to send me for what I might learn there; here are schoolmasters afraid to let their boys go home for the holidays for fear of what they may learn there!

Ask any schoolmaster you will of how his boys come back from the Christmas holidays! Listen well to his reply! Dance, theatre, dance, night club! Theatre, dance, night club! Drinking? Well, when otherwise reputable people give dances to youngsters between fifteen and twenty and let champagne and other intoxicating beverages flow like water, what do you expect? When even young girls carry flasks, what do you expect!

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They are imitative! They follow their elders! They ape their so-called betters! What do you expect?

How do we keep them straight in our schools? Well, here is one answer: Boyhood is supremely idealistic. Yes, even in this selfish age, the youth of our country will sacrifice themselves for an ideal. Give them an ideal to fight for and they will do anything, if one can "get" them, to further that ideal. Knowing this, we schoolmasters impress upon our youngsters the ideal of the school. No school can be great if unclean. No school can stand if there is liquor present, and so forth. Do we win? Again, ask our boys! The colleges, if they were not so filled with their own importance, might take a lesson from our schools. We send them forth like young knights with burnished swords ready for the fight. In some cases it does not take

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more than a year of college to dull the brightest blade, to smash the highest ideal, to bring about a fleshly victory. The reason? Well, one reason is liquor! *Liquor*. It is no good camouflaging the issue. There is drinking in the colleges, more vicious than ever in the history of this land. Why cannot something be done about it! Again ask the boys themselves! The daily college newspapers of three great institutions carried on an investigation. Did you notice the resultant figures? And yet there are still some misguided people who claim that Prohibition has been our country's greatest blessing. Fools! Awake! God help him, what is he up against? We must wake up. We must help him. Why do we allow these things to be? Youth will always fight for an ideal. I once saw a great university melt away to go to war. Yes, and it was before the

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draft! Here is another battle, a much greater battle, for him to win. But you will never get him to win it by Prohibition. Teach him to fight for an ideal,—the school, the college, the nation. Schoolmasters have found it so. Why not other leaders of youth? In this school of mine to touch liquor is a sin against the brotherhood, and the boy who fails is himself thrown out by the boys themselves. Impossible do you say? Not a bit! What is there impossible to a son of God!

To those of you who are hopeless about the present state of affairs, allow me to add another word of comfort.

Never in my years of teaching have I seen such a love of truth and hatred of a sham as I have found in modern youth. To deceive a schoolmaster by hook or by crook in my boarding school days was thought no sin. These young-

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sters today, with their hatred of a lie, will nearly always tell you the truth, even though it involves their own expulsion! So firm are we in this knowledge that we can trust their word of honour as absolute truth. This may be an outcome of the scientific age. But whatever its cause, it stands out as a realized fact. After all, it is not wonderful in a generation which has decided to give up fairy tales and hold on to fact! If one is determined to find out the real for oneself, it would be foolish for one to lie about oneself. Now, if this modern generation is after the truth, it will not be long before they realize the falsity of this present situation in regard to liquor and other things. I see signs of this realization already. They are so wearied of other lies that it will not be long before they realize this lie, also. And we shall help them come

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the quicker to this realization if we take away the charm and the thrill of breaking the country's law! "Oh Liberty! Liberty! How many crimes are done in thy name!"

### FOURTHLY: HOW DOES HE STAND UP IN A BOOTLEGGING WORLD?

BOOTLEGGING, although of course chiefly concerned with liquor, has expanded into other avenues of trade. To represent something as the reality while as a matter of fact it is altogether different, is one of the great failures of American life. So we have bootleg milk! Bootleg money! Bootleg banking! Bootleg friendship! Bootleg marriage!

The man who procures liquor for his

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patrons is but typical of the age in many different phases of life. To make money and make it quickly we Americans stoop to many means, and bootlegging seems to be the most profitable.

To represent the false for the true pays well and pays quickly. Therefore *vide* the bootlegger. Of course it is only men who know, men of the older age, who come to the realization that money so gained goes just as quickly, and is worthless. "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own self?" is advice little regarded until satiety has taught the worthlessness of possessions, and then for most of us it is too late! Too late? Yes, for the "self" is lost and cannot be regained.

Standing before him I have often inveighed against his indifference. Why can't I make you see why? Why? Why? It is one of the penalties we

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pay for our own youthful folly, perchance, that we cannot make youth realize the futility of possessions material. It is all so thrilling to him. So thrilling is this world and its delights. And he wants them all quickly. He does not look into the future. That is a peculiarity of the modern boy. He does not see himself in the future. To tell him that certain causes foreshadow certain, most certain, results merely provokes a laugh. To tell him that some day "His bones will be filled with the sins of his youth," again provokes a laugh. He is indifferent to his own future well-being! This indifference is the hardest nut that we schoolmasters have to crack. Mind you, I am talking about the average boy. Of course, thank God, there are still some of them that can be reached, and reached quickly. But the average is as I have said. There-



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fore they are found as an easy prey to those who would pander to their evil desires. And the panders—may they get their final reward quickly—are many and varied. It may be an active bootlegger, it may be a foolish elder, or it may be a senseless parent. It is a bootlegging world he lives in. How does he stand up? If you look on the outside you would at first feel that he does not stand up at all. If you judge him by the Daily Tabloids, you would know that he does not stand up at all. Perhaps you who have not studied him believe he does not stand up at all. Yet he does. In his own way he does.

Two of my best came down from college to see me one Sunday. "We are going to get drunk on Wednesday," said they. Shocked, I looked at them. "You two, do you mean it? Impossible!"

"No, the truth; we cannot help it."

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"Cannot help it? You two!"

"Well, we don't want to, we own, but we can't stand the gaff. We have just been elected to the . . . , and the Alumni are giving us all a dinner in New York and everyone has to get drunk! The whole crowd will get drunk!" (Truly, it is a bootlegging world!)

"What about our ideas down here at the School, what about your former lives led here?"

They laughed. "You buncoed us down here," said they, "you taught us that a man in college could stand up against it. Well, we can't and we won't!"

Next Sunday I met one of them again, a wiser, if perchance a sadder man.

"Was it worth while?"

"No!"

"Are you ashamed?"

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“Well, I don’t know!” He was, I knew it. Then he broke out: “It is so different here at school. When I was here I felt that taking a drink was a thing no fellow could do. But at college, when I found nearly everyone was drinking, I could not stand up.”

And yet they have since, both of them! The panderer got hold of them; in this case the panderer was the Alumni, but the panderer got hold of them. However, he could not keep them.

And this is a typical case and carries out what I said before, that he has got to find out for himself. Again, when he has got the facts, he himself for the most part will decide by the Truth. It is a pitiful thing that he will act thus and not listen to others. But the great hope is again, as I have said before, that this modern generation of ours is really after Truth, after Fact, and when they

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find out, the majority act accordingly. But who brought in the bootlegger, they or we? Who is responsible for the panderer?

“Woe be to him by whom the offence cometh!”

## HOW DOES HE STAND UP IN AN AUTOMOBILE WORLD?

A BOY had been dismissed from school, not for any moral offence, but because he could not understand the first law of obedience. When he arrived at his home he was met by his parents, who had a new car with them. They then and there presented the boy with the new car to make up for the hardness of heart of the brute of a Head Master, who had had the audacity to ask their darling's withdrawal!

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Again and again at commencement time I see parents come with a new car, and I know that so and so is to have a dangerous diploma-present. A request came only yesterday that I should allow a boy to go to a nearby town and get a driver's license. He is three years from graduation, but his seventeenth birthday had to be celebrated. And his fond parent was anxious that as soon as he arrived home he might step into his own car!

Have you seen them at seaside places, and the shore resorts? Half-clothed in what they call bathing suits, packed closely in these cars of theirs? Have you seen the cars outside the college dance halls, and outside the country clubs when a dance is on? Do you know that many times there is liquor there also? They leave the dances to go for rides, where to? Well, where would they

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go? God help them. What is the matter with us all that we should allow such things? What is to become of America if we allow such things? We let loose hell on earth and then we blame the modern generation. Drive slowly, if you will, along the country roads at night, the country roads near a great city. Count the parked cars! Is it nothing to you? God help him! What is he not up against?

This automobile condition is to me the worst of all. God knows his life is dangerous enough at the ages of fifteen to twenty without this thing. And there are girls to be picked up at nearly every corner! And they are not bad girls, either; it is just that they don't know what they're doing. The love of a thrill, the love of danger, in a Godless world, in a selfish world, in a sensual world, in an automobile world!

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HOW DOES HE STAND UP IN A WORLD  
WITHOUT PARENTAL CONTROL?

THE ability to say "No" has well nigh vanished. Few and far between are the families where discipline reigns.

He appeared at my door the first day of term, he appeared a vision in blue. A blue suit, a blue handkerchief in his pocket, blue socks, a blue tie. He appeared and two adoring parents came behind him. A frown was on his brow. A deeper frown was on his parents' brows. He stood and looked at me and waited. Then his mother spoke:—

"Our son has always had the best of everything!" she said.

I looked from him to her, slowly I turned from him to her.

"Of a truth, Madam, he looks it," said I.

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Unheeding my sarcasm, she blurted out wrathfully, "You put my son in the . . . House, and it is the worst of all your houses."

"Yes," I replied, "I'm sorry, it's all I have."

"But," she cried, "you must change him at once. Our son must have the best house in the school."

Patiently I looked at her. "I do not think you realize, Madam, that this is a very old school, with many graduates. The other houses have been filled for a long time. You entered your son only last January. I have no other room I can give him."

She bristled visibly. "You must put him in your best house," said she. Languidly he had listened to this discussion. But he pricked up his ears when I said, "You must try some other school. I have nothing else. Some hundreds of



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boys are anxious for this place, so you need not bother about your contract."

"What," said he, "is this true?"

"Young man," said I, "I have not yet learned to lie, and another thing, if you want to stay here, you will address me as 'Sir.'"

"A hundred or so boys want this place . . . Sir?"

"Yes."

"Mother, I'll stay, Father, I'll stay." And he led them to the door. There he turned.

"Where's my trunk?" said he. I did not answer.

"Sir!" said he, a moment after, "where's my trunk?"

"If you followed the instructions given, it is at the express office," and I pointed through the window at the office across the way.

The parents led him out and I

## HOW HE STANDS UP

watched as father and mother started to walk the hundred yards that separated them from the trunk.

"Father, come here, Mother, come here!" And he threw open the door of their expensive motor car.

"Son," said the father, "it is only a step."

"Come, get in the car," said he. They came patiently and he hustled them in.

We kept him only a year, though we did our best. He was ruined before he started, poor boy.

Of course, this is an extreme case, but symptomatic.

Another phase of the matter. A man brings his boy to me and says: "I have had to work for my living ever since I was in grammar school. I want my boy to have everything that I did not have. I want you to give him the best of everything you have here."

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"My dear sir," I reply, "you want to take away from your boy the very thing that made you, hard work."

Another phase. A father brings his boy to me and says, "How soon can you get this youngster into college?" And if, after talking with the boy, I designate a period too long, he goes away disgruntled. Just bargain and sale. No question as to how do you form character here. No question as to the morale of the school, etc., but just a question of dollars and cents. How long?

One Christmas holidays I received a hurry call from New York. A weeping mother over the telephone demanded my presence and then hung up the receiver. Thinking one of my boys must be *in extremis*, I hastened to the city. When I arrived, the woman was still in tears, had been crying for days, according to her looks.

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"What is the matter?" I asked fearfully.

"John came home a week ago and I have hardly laid eyes upon him. He sleeps all morning until two o'clock, when he has his lunch and goes out. I hear him come in again at two or three A. M. Can't you do something, can't you, please!"

I looked through the years. John indulged and yielded to since birth. Always yielded to. Poor John, and now master of his mother, he followed his own bent. At school he was almost beyond reproach. Hard to manage, perhaps, but a decent citizen whom one liked to have around. But at home! Symptomatic, symptomatic, I'm afraid.

Another phase: A father and mother divorced, and perhaps, as sometimes happens, both married again. Each family hoping to keep the affection of

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the boy, indulges him to the extreme. Each family trying to out-do the other.

Parental control, parental discipline, it has vanished with the old-fashioned home. It has vanished with the advent of the apartment. It has vanished with the old "foolish" idea that one must practice self-sacrifice in dealing with one's children.

Now, do not think that I don't sympathize. I do. The difficulty of parenthood is enormous at these times.

"How can I say 'No,' " said a mother to me, "when all the children that he knows and plays with are allowed to do such things? Why should I make him peculiar, lonely, a mark, amongst them? If Tom and Fred and James are allowed to drive the car, why should not my boy Bill?"

The difficulty is enormous I grant you, but we have got to think of him. A

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parents' league is a wonderful thing if parents would only form a real league, but we are a nation of law-breakers, and the leagues so far are mere "scraps of paper." Yes, his is a world of weak or no parental control, and yet, in spite of it all, he is working out his own way of life. But how different it would be, how much easier it would be, and how much happier it would be for him if he only had the guidance and restraint and discipline that youth needs at home as well as at school. It needs only self-sacrifice, that is all. The Master knew it. "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

## THE BOY TODAY

### A "ROUGHNECK," "HARD-BOILED" WORLD HE LIVES IN

COURTESY, chivalry, gratitude, politeness, the charm of good breeding, seem to be giving way to a "roughneck" age. To be called "hard-boiled" is almost considered a compliment. "Almost?" In some circles it is considered a compliment. Long since have we lost the art of conversation. Slang and blasphemy have taken great hold of us as a nation. It is not a pleasant fact to face, but it is true. He comes into this world, he apes his elders. He acts the part, overacts the part. He pretends to be so much worse than he really is. You find this out when you get at his real self. It is mostly a piece of acting on all our parts, but it is not good for him. A pretence is always bad, and to pretend to be

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something often leads to being that something. To pretend to be "in the know," often leads to places and things which get him "in the know." To pretend to be a blackguard at times introduces one.

We have produced for him a law-breaking world. On every side he hears stories of disregard of law, on every side he sees men of all classes breaking the law and "getting away with it." He listens, he hears, he sees. He knows in his soul that it is all wrong, somehow, somewhere. He feels that we are all wrong somewhere. He beholds our hypocrisy. And he hates hypocrisy. He is after facts. If we are all wrong, if we have produced a civilization of hypocrisy and cant, then away with hypocrisy and cant. If we don't live up to what we preach, then he will not. How can he



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reverence or believe in those who say one thing and act otherwise? So he takes to "smashing," also. What right have we to rule him when we do not rule ourselves? What right have we to make laws for him, when we disregard authority? Confused, perplexed, he hits against authority and discipline. He feels that we are all wrong somewhere, and so he smashes blindly, and shouts for what he calls Freedom. Sometimes, unfortunately, he mistakes license for Freedom. Sometimes, in his desire for what he calls "self-expression," he tries to overthrow the laws of God. In his war against what he thinks is superstition, he hits against the reality of Life. No wonder that we tremble for him! And yet it is only through suffering that great things come to pass. There is no doubt that we ourselves realize that something is absolutely wrong some-

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where. We realize that things cannot go on as they have been. We realize that we can never bring back the sweet content of the nineteenth century, or even the status of the early twentieth. We realize somehow that, so far, our way of life has led to failure and unhappiness. Here he comes, smashing into our sensibilities, doing things in a way we shudder at. But he is after something. Will he find it? In my soul I believe he will. I have lived with him so long, I have loved him so long, I cannot feel that he will fail. Of course, there are failures and disasters by the way. There always have been, in every great upheaval. But he is after Truth. We have lived in a world of make-believe happiness. He is after happiness itself. Fighting, blindly if you will, but still fighting for truth, for reality. Hopeless often. Disgruntled, upset, overwhelmed often, but

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still fighting. Often refusing those that would help him and could help him. Often missing, but underneath it all, wanting to find the real and the true. I shall not live to see the result that I believe will come, that I know will come. For out of this froth, fury, sin, law-breaking, helpless longing, strife, defeat, hope, truth-seeking, hatred of the false, scorn for fairy tales, irreverence for age, disregard of elders and their teaching, I believe in my soul they are going to find and produce a happier state than has yet been; and bring us one step nearer the kingdom of heaven and keener appreciation of the reality of the teaching of the Man of Nazareth.

## HE IS AN ICONOCLAST

### HE IS AN ICONOCLAST

AN IDOL-BREAKER? Of course he is! Why should he not be? The break had to come, for God is truth, and truth, like murder, will out! As I have written so often before, fairy tales will not do for a generation who hate a lie, and from the year One we have lied to our children.

Now the idol, the shattering of which has had, I believe, the greatest effect upon the modern boy, is the old-fashioned idea of the angelic nature of womanhood. Woman had by man been placed on a pedestal, her freedom curtailed, her modesty extolled, her purity for the most part unquestioned. Men rose at her entrance. Men bowed and salaamed before her person. Men fought and even died for her good name.

It was true, of course, that there was

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another class of woman in the red-light background, but such were things apart. Even an angel fell from heaven! These unmentionable ones who fell from her high estate were not spoken about except on occasion behind closed doors! They were as if they were not!

Well, woman came down from her pedestal demanding equal rights. As, by hook or by crook, always has she obtained her own way, so in this claim also was she successful!

Then the Boy comes along into the picture. He finds that in woman also the older world has been mistaken. Moreover, in this land of so-called freedom and free speech it was not long before he found out that woman would speak freely of herself and her desires to him. The idol was broken and cast down, and woman seemed to love to have it so. The reverence for a purity

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which had supposedly existed for ages, but which, perhaps was false, vanished. He finds another animal like himself, with the same temptations, the same desires, almost the same thoughts. Also, thank God, he sometimes finds the same struggle after the divine, the same restlessness, the same dissatisfaction; for neither one nor the other can get away from the fact that God's children are God's children, and for that reason the animal cannot satisfy.

Unfortunately, from this new knowledge came also an intensified sense attraction, and a close and lasting companionship, sometimes good but often evil. Woman, suddenly unshackled from restriction, and obtaining equality, naturally has for the time gone too far. When an idol is overthrown there is ever a time of maladjustment. Until readjustment comes, the Boy will have to

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suffer. Moreover, we who have been brought up to worship idols and still cling to them cannot understand what he is going through, and therefore think that he is on the road to perdition, while in reality he is trying to meet an upheaval unprecedented in history. Moreover, in his usual fashion, he is meeting it openly and unashamed. The terrifying question is this: "In breaking down what was untrue will he also attempt to smash what is real and true? It is absolutely right for him to meet woman on her own ground of equality, and find out that there is not much difference between him and her, but how will he deal with the fundamental law of God in regard to free love?" Only the future can give the answer. To one who loves him, and half understands him, the future appears fraught with danger and the present almost intolerable. Yet have I such faith

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in his love of truth, and in his divine sonship that I believe he will eventually overcome this present day attack of animality and seeming retrogression, and that he and she will bring into being a better state of affairs in this respect than the world has yet seen. This idol is, however, shattered, and can never be put together again. But woe betide him if he make war on a fundamental law of truth.

Another idol of very ancient lineage which the Boy has removed is reverence for age. In speaking about him the other night before a large audience of men, I was not astonished to hear one disgruntled being call out in anger, "What I hate about the modern generation is their want of reverence for age!" My answer was swift and direct: "I have



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always found youth reverent towards age where reverence was due!"

Just because a man is old does not necessarily mean that he deserves reverence. To the Boy today a man has to "show something," or else he will disregard him. But self-consciousness in the presence of age he has not. He has no fear of personality, be it old or young, and yet to the worth-while man he will show an upstanding homage much more impressive than the obsequiousness of former days.

I still have a vision of a visit paid to me, some months ago, by a very learned and noted Englishman. In the evening I had asked the more intelligent of my senior class to come over to my study and meet the great man. In they came, unabashed by greatness. Hardly had they been introduced, and before the visitor had a chance to speak, question followed

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question. Moreover, they commented, sometimes in hostile fashion, on his answers! At first the man appeared overwhelmed and annoyed at their daring, then all of a sudden he seemed to realize that this was a new sort of adulation. Next day, at a recess period when he was to meet me, the man did not come to my office. So I set out to look for him. I found him at the door of the schoolhouse, seated on the doorstep, surrounded by these same boys. He himself had sought them out! He had actually cut an appointment with one of the great college presidents of our country in order to talk with these irreverent youngsters! Such a difference is there in the understanding heart. The Boy will bow down to, and worship what he believes to be the real, and the true, and the great, but he will openly show his dislike and disapproba-

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tion to the false and the foolish, be it old or young.

This is also true of the way he treats the Church, and the so-called ministers of the Gospel. It is the "man behind the gun" that he is after. I have heard him laugh to scorn what I have thought was the best of sermons because, to use his own words, "he thought it was all camouflage." On the other hand, I have heard him praise to the skies a talk I thought almost worthless, because he believed the man was sincere and spoke from his heart. Yes, the Church, wherever it is false, is another idol he is after. Beware, ye churchmen, of this modern generation! Bewail as you will their absence from your services; turn your wrath upon this upstart youth who fail to attend your sermons, but *look to yourselves!* It may be that you are failing, not he. Look to him, for he is hungry

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for something, restless for something, unhappy because the divine will not be stifled, cannot be stifled! *Look to yourselves!*

Then here comes the danger from his iconoclasm. Will he give up God? Will he give up God because he has found that the God usually taught by all the sects is inconceivable to him? I believe not, for the Father—almighty love—will not give him up. Truth and love exist everlastingly, whether this material world exists or not; whether it is true or not, as the great astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington, declares, that “the universe is slowly committing suicide.” Truth and love are everlasting in spite of the fact of material animal man.

When will man look into the hell of material existence, and thus come to realize the everlasting, all powerful truth of the Master’s words: “God is a Spirit,

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and they that worship Him must worship Him *in spirit and in truth*." And the opposite truth: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. . . . For he is a liar and the father of it."

Ah me! How long will it take before his restlessness, his satiety of material delights, his sorrow and disappointment, his false cynicism and assumed sophistication will, by their untruth, force him to see the falsity and deception of his material self, and will drive him to realize that the mystical and spiritual side of him is worth study as leading to the only reality and the only God possible. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known."

Truly he is an iconoclast, and the

## HE WANTS TO ESCAPE

world needs him. But where or whence will come the constructive leader and builder? The world is waiting for him.

## HE WANTS TO ESCAPE

THE EVERLASTING boredom of it all, the humdrum necessities of daily life, the doing of the same things day after day, year after year, hit us all. In time however, we of the older generation got used to it. We took life on faith—arose in the morning, worked a great deal, played a little, ate three times a day, then went to sleep. We became bored often, disappointed often, but shrugged our shoulders and went on. Tired, often wearied with it all, rebelling at times, then suppressing our rebellion as well as we could, we still knuckled under and went on.

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Seeking escape, we found it at times in music, in the arts, in books, in the drama and in dreams. Lastly, there was always the refuge and consolations of religion.

But the Boy! It interests me greatly to try to ascertain where he obtained the audacity to rebel. For rebel he did. In his wondrous self-assurance he believes that we are all wrong, have been wrong right along. He wants to start things all over again. He is not, as we were, willing to accept the dry facts of life, the necessity of hard work, the absolute obligation of obedience to the daily round, the common task. He wants to be a ruler—a king—all at once. In other words, he desires to escape from that from which there is no escape. In his youthful enthusiasm he believes he can find a way out, because, in his unrecognized self-conceit, he acknowledges that it is we and not the facts of mortal life

## HE WANTS TO ESCAPE

that are wrong. He thinks that we have made life humdrum, monotonous, hard to bear. He knows and claims that there is something wrong, somewhere, and he is going to set it right. We know and have learned from experience that there *is* something *abominably* wrong, somewhere, but we know, also, that there is no mending it, except perhaps through suffering. The Boy believes he can escape. We know he cannot. Yet his enthusiasm is glorious.

In common with all reformers he believes that we, the opposite party, are in utter error and have been from the start. Therefore he wants to overthrow things and start afresh. That is the reason for his iconoclasm. Thus does he seek to escape.

But the unfortunate thing about his search is that, to all appearance, he seems to be using the very weapon which has



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destroyed us, namely *selfishness*. His cry is, "I do not want to suffer, I do not like monotony, I hate suppression, I am unwilling to obey. I seek my own freedom, I claim to do as I like, to win as I like, to fail as I like. You are bored, abominably bored, with your conception of life. Your doctrine of *laissez-faire* has brought about all this unhappiness. I am awake! I know that this life can be a glorious thing and I am going to find out the way. I shall escape. To do so, I must be free."

Therefore he throws over, or attempts to throw over, our laws and all that we have learned from the past. Hence comes his thirst for what he calls a thrill. Hence comes his restlessness. Hence, at last, comes his satiety. Hence will come his bitter disappointment, his disillusionment, his sense of defeat.

Ah, this mystery of mortal life!

## HE WANTS TO ESCAPE

Who can solve it? One thing you and I have found out, and although we may be slow to admit it, we know it to be true. It is that to seek happiness through material channels leads only to sorrow and disaster. Such happiness, so-called, is ephemeral, and therefore not worth the winning. This we have found out through sad and bitter experience.

You tell the Boy so, and he will laugh in reply. He thinks he knows better. "You have gone the wrong way about it; that's all that's wrong," he says, "self suppression has bewitched you. We are going to find out the real way!" Adorable fool is he, in his enthusiasm.

A boy of twenty-two once came to me and said, "I believe I have experienced about every thrill there is in life, so there is nothing left but death!" Nothing left but death! Yet natural enough, for

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that is all there *is* to the material, in the end. Death is the natural end. With all our glory as a nation, with all our riches, with all our material power, still for each one of us there is "nothing left but death!" That is, if we trust only to the material.

This desire for escape so evident in each one of us, but much stronger in Boy than in us, may lead him to find out where we have been wrong. This I pray for, although, at present, it must be admitted that, although the Boy thinks that we are all wrong, yet he, himself, is using as a starting point the same quality which lies at the base of our failure. He seems to be selfishly seeking his own happiness, and, with little thought of others, is following his own desires. In other words, on the surface it looks as though the only god he worships is himself. His one great criticism of us and our way of liv-

## HE WANTS TO ESCAPE

ing is that our method retards *self-expression*; therefore he selfishly breaks all that stands in his way.

From this cause comes his restlessness and his unhappiness, for I believe that of all recent generations, the present is the most discontented, restless and unhappy. The question is, therefore, will this discontent, this unhappy longing for a freedom which the Boy does not find; these unfortunate and disastrous experiments lead him, through his unprecedented hatred of a sham, to what you and I know to be the only source of happiness, despite the fact that we seldom seek it. If it does,—and I honestly believe somehow, that his love of truth will lead him to it,—if it does, then the Boy with his peculiar enthusiasm, courage and iconoclasm, may smash this idol of selfishness which we have worshipped, although, in our hearts, we knew it for a false god.

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Thus he may come to tread the only road to satisfaction and happiness there is in this world, namely, self-sacrifice. "For he that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life shall find it."

### WHAT ARE WE TO DO ABOUT HIS PARENTS?

STRANGE question, is it not? As if we could do anything about his parents! Unfortunately, we have not much to do with his parents that can be of any good.

Now in the first place, I want you to know that I have the deepest sympathy with the fathers and mothers of the present day. To use the Boy's own slang, it is not only he who is "up against it," but the modern parent is also in a very difficult position. The great cities of today

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with their apartments instead of homes, are no places in which to bring up boys, no matter how good his parents may be. As a proof of this I find that, of late, parents who really care for their young take their children off for the holidays to places in the country or out on the Western ranches and so forth, in order to take them away from the "delights" of the city. Similarly, parents place their children in the now multitudinous summer camps, in order to protect them. But the great majority of fathers and mothers, I am sorry to say, in the holidays let their offspring wander where they will! I have an idea back of my head that many parents send their boys to college, school or camp because they find themselves incapable of accomplishing their parental duty in this complex civilization of ours. Consequently they hand over their responsibility to others.

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I once asked a great educator as to the age at which I should take boys into school? His ready response was, "At the age of twelve, for that is the time when the modern boy begins to obtain the ascendancy over his mother!" (Not a word about the father, by the way!) The more I deal with the modern American boy, the more I find that he has only one parent—his mother. And how mothers differ! In the old days when I began teaching, (alas! how many years ago!) one could always bring tears to a boy's eyes—even a naughty boy's eyes—by mentioning his mother. A last appeal to the wicked was a request that they think of their mother. "What would she say, how would she feel, if she knew about *this*?" But nowadays it is dangerous to make that appeal, to such a degree do mothers differ. I dare not go into what I mean by this difference, but you

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all know. Anyway, the boy knows all about his mother nowadays. He knows all about her and her doings, good or the opposite. Moreover, a great many boys have two mothers living, his own and the "new one." So it would be embarrassing if he should reply, "Which?"

Not that there are not good mothers. God bless them! Their name is legion, and one can always, or nearly always, from his character, pick out the boy who has a real mother. But even the good mothers are up against it in this new world of ours. And therefore they need all the help that we can give them. The good mothers really care, and yet are at a loss what to do. In this age of *self-expression* the psychologists and other scientists tell them it is dangerous to "suppress" or coerce. If they do not coerce, they—such is the nature of the human boy—lose their hold, and there



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are no limits to which self-expression may not lead the child.

But naturally, many mothers, wishing to do the best for their offspring, listen to the scientists who demand free self-expression, and thus start their boys on the way to license. For call this new freedom self-expression or what you will; its real name is license.

Not for a moment would I bring back the stern and soul-devastating restraint of our ancestors, but, today, there is a great need of reasonable restraint and careful discipline in the world of youth. But such restraint is difficult, because it requires technique, and self-sacrifice, and time, and, most of all, patience—conditions which are not cheap in this age.

Just one preliminary statement: I honestly believe that most parents really desire to do what is best for their off-

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spring, but, in this complexity of modern life and new conflicting ideas, they *do not know* what is best for their young; moreover, so busy are they with other *duties* that they have not the time to bring up their children properly.

The result is that modern psychologists are leaning toward the idea of state institutions for the bringing up of the young of the race, inasmuch as the home and the parents have failed. A state institution that would *take* the baby away from its parents at birth! Some go so far as to suggest that only certain mothers be allowed to have children, and that the sires be chosen by the state! God help us, to what are we coming? We certainly are descending to the animal! Is mother-love all wrong? What is going to become of us? And yet—am I right in differing from these advanced

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psychologists? In the daily round of a Head Master's life what do I see?

First, a mistaken idea of what parental love is.

"New York on the 'phone, sir."

"Yes, what do you want," say I, as I take up the receiver.

"This is Mr. X . . . . of Ohio. I am in New York. Please send my son to New York immediately. I must buy him some clothes, as he greatly needs them." I think quickly. Sometimes even a Head Master can think! New York? World Series!

"Mr. X . . . .," say I, "you may have your boy if the tailor is really what you want, but I shall let him go only on your promise that you will not take him to the World Series!"

"Doctor," comes the answer, "I don't think we need bother about the clothes!"

So the boy continues at his desk. Now

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these parents have sent their boy to me in order that I may try to make a man of him, to make him a law-abiding citizen. But I no sooner get him than one or the other of them tries, by subterfuge or otherwise, to break one of the school laws. Then, when I refuse, they get angry. They are not all like Mr. X . . . .

“Is he not my boy?” they say.

“Of course he is, and you may do what you will with your boy; but I can do what I will with this school, and if you allow your boy to do this thing, you will have to take him out of the school.”

An angry scene follows. Parents of this sort do not *really* love their children. They act from one of two motives, either from self-love because, although they know it is not good for him, they want their boy for the moment, just as one wants a toy to play with, or else the boy has been plaguing them for the favour,

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and they, in their self-love, want to indulge him.

Again: a mother comes to me and tells me of all the temptations, etc., which beset the children of her home-town. She is afraid for her boy. What can she do to keep him clean and straight? I reply that there is no influence so good as that of a good home and a good mother. Then she tells me how impossible it is for her or her husband to look after the children properly, saying with pride that her social duties are heavy, and their time much taken up.

Well, then I may suggest, as we have a rather good school, that she send him to us. When can she send him?

“Oh, not for a year or so!”

I am surprised at this and reply: “If you cannot look after your boy properly, and if the home is not the place for him,

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why not send him at once from dangers that beset him?"

"Oh, I cannot bear to let him go *yet*," is the usual answer. "I love him so I cannot part with him so soon! . . ." Self-love, not mother-love! Are the psychologists right?

And so I might go on *ad infinitum*, telling stories of parents of this kind whom I meet in my daily life, and relating stories of my business in making men, hampered by foolish requests, foolish desires, and foolish criticisms of those who are supposed to love their children.

What happens in the holidays to the children of this sort of parent? I leave the answer to your imagination, and I'll undertake to say you won't be far wrong.

Secondly I see running with the crowd, or "keeping up with the Joneses!"

What a Head Master suffers from this

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form of snobbishness, can hardly be put in words. Health, happiness, decency, honesty, aye, all the virtues perchance, are sacrificed to this idol. The boy enjoys it—of course he does. How could he help it? More than that, his arguments are mostly based on this theorem: "If Jimmy Jones has it, why cannot I?"

In schooltime it takes the form of money sent surreptitiously, of food and candy smuggled in, of many suits of clothes, etc., etc., with their natural concomitants of broken regulations followed by punishment, resentment and weariness.

In the holidays motor-cars, theatre and parties lasting till dawn—later, liquor, perhaps, and other things! But, "How can you refuse Freddy, when all his crowd are doing it? The poor boy has a hard enough life under your strict discipline at school. These are his holidays,

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and in them provision should be made for self-expression!" Heavens, how I hate that word!

Third: A silly fear of saying "No."

This fear I have dealt with already, but I should like to ask what is going to happen to us if the old quality of *obedience* is thrown to the winds? It is a trite saying, but any thinker knows that no one can rule properly who has not first learnt to obey. *Obedience is the first law of happiness.* But I forgot, Young America today does not want to be happy, it wants to be free. Again I repeat, "Oh Liberty! Liberty! How many crimes are done in thy name!"

Fourth: The modern habit of divorce.

A great modern college dean has shown by statistics that one-fourth of the boys at college who are sons of divorced parents fail at his institution. Do they also fail in life? We have no statistics,



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but how can it be otherwise when the Boy has to face what he has to face? Under such conditions it takes a positively splendid character to succeed, and under such conditions *few* children form a splendid character, *and the fault is not theirs.*

What are we going to do about the parents? Frankly, I do not know. Where (if report is true), even some of our great psychologists themselves fail as parents, and those that take their advice fail as parents, what can we humble schoolmasters do about it but wait, and love, and believe in the Boy. And after all, there is one Parent who does not fail, if haply he can find Him.

## CAN WE HELP?

### HOW CAN WE HELP THE BOY?

THE UNFORTUNATE part about helping him is that he does not want to be helped. He is self-sufficient. That is, while he is well and untouched by sorrow. When things hit him it is altogether a different matter. It is one of his weaknesses to rebel against most things, and therefore, when he is hit hard, he usually collapses. For this reason he is somewhat cowardly in sickness, or when he is in trouble. Otherwise, he is so self-assured and certain of himself that it is a difficult matter to get at him, or to use a slang phrase which is most expressive, it is a difficult matter to get "under his skin."

To get at him collectively is well-nigh impossible. A good speaker is often mistaken in the effect of his words. The

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Boy listens sometimes enwrapt. On occasion, tears will come to his eyes. He will laugh and he will weep. Unless he knows, the speaker may think he has done good work, that he has made a lasting impression, that the Boy will be the better for the words he has heard. Not a bit of it. All he wants is a thrill. If you can give it to him, you are worth listening to, if you cannot, you are no good. In other words, he regards you as he does an actor. "Let him amuse me if he can." He cannot get it into his head that you really are in earnest, and are giving your utmost to get something across to him.

In the innocent days of my Head Mastership, I spoke often. The Boy's deep appreciation and silent attention to my words more than gratified me. I thought I was doing my job nobly! Alas, poor fool! One morning—it was a Wednesday morning, the day of the

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week when I always talked in chapel—I said to a boy I especially trusted, “Ned, I am going to let you all off this morning.”

“Oh,” he replied, “I am sorry.”

“Ned,” said I, “tell me honestly, how long does the effect last?”

“Do you want me to tell you the truth?” he returned.

“Of course.”

“Well, Doctor, it lasts wonderfully while you are talking, and, I should say, for about five minutes afterwards.” The dear boy laughed as we went into chapel; I laughed also, to hide the blow. It was nine years ago, but I have not forgotten it. I have given up my Wednesday talks. Now I talk only when I have to. I refuse to be an actor to please the Boy.

Silently I often smile to myself at the good ministers who come to us on Sundays. I get the best and nearly always

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they give the boys a thrill. But if these men but knew what those respectful-appearing silent boys were thinking, I often wonder how they would feel! Unfortunately, I *do* know, for I am told afterwards. To give a rather amusing incident in point: As I passed into chapel one Sunday evening at vespers, I overheard the boy-president of the School whisper in his leaders' ears, "Tell the school to try and outsing Woodie tonight." Now "Woodie" is one of the most beloved masters in the School, the choirmaster and one of the best teachers of school-singing I have ever known. He has a very powerful tenor voice. As I came out of chapel, a very self-satisfied minister turned to me and said sentimentally, "The halls of heaven must be very happy tonight."

"Why especially tonight, sir?" asked I.

"Because of that grand volume of

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song and praise ascending from those dear young voices!" he replied enthusiastically. "I never heard anything like it."

Was it my love of truth, or a temptation unresisted, that led—— "Sorry to disillusion you, sir," said I, "but as I came into chapel tonight, I heard something which leads me to think that those 'dear young voices' were attempting to outsing their choirmaster."

The man's face fell, and immediately I felt sorry. One always does after unresisted temptation.

But you cannot get at The Boy collectively. You might as well speak to Mont Blanc.

How *can* you get at him, then? Well, get him alone preferably; if not, with one or two others. Get him before a fire of a winter evening. Get him when he is a bit down on his luck, a bit off his

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guard. Then he will come again, and perhaps again. Then he will be frank as only the modern boy can be. It takes an enormous amount of time, of patience, of self-sacrifice. And yet the reward is great. You may succeed in changing a soul for life, in lifting a ne'er-do-well into a man, in helping one out of what is now scientifically called an inferiority complex, in putting new life into an unhappy one, and in bringing out the divine power, which is in each one of the sons of God.

But like good work of every kind, it requires technique. In the first place, you must never go to him. He must come to you. This is the most difficult thing of all. Especially difficult for a parent, and more especially for a Head Master. The boy feels because he has to punish that the Head Master is severe and hard. Little he knows! But get

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him to come to you. Then sometimes you get a pleasant surprise. The self-assurance, the conceit, the know-it-allness, the hard-boiledness fall off him like a coat. God be thanked it is only a cult after all! Boyhood is fundamentally the same as boyhood always has been.

Secondly, you must never talk down to him. That method always kills everything. You must be to him a fellow-passenger from the cradle to the grave. You must speak his own language, and, what is still more difficult to accomplish because he has been fooled so often, you must make him feel that you are no humbug, that you have to face just what he has to face, that you make the same mistakes, that you have the same things to contend with, that you do not know the truth, and never will, that you are *trying* to, and because of your experience, perhaps, trying a little harder than he. If



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he believes you and you are really sincere, this will get to him at once.

Lastly, therefore, you must be sincere. This most of all. God help you if you are not! A boy came to me the other night saying, "You won't be angry with me?"

"Why, no," I replied, "why should I be?"

"I'm going to say something, something I have wanted to ask you for a long time."

"Go ahead!"

"Doctor, what are you after? I have often wondered. Please tell me."

The shock was startling.

"X . . .," I answered, "you have been with me a long time. Six years, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Then what do you *think* I'm after?"

"I don't know, that's just it."

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"You can't imagine that I'm after real happiness for you and the others. That I'm giving my life to try to make you all?"

He shook his head. "No," he said, "I can't believe it."

After all these years, it was well-nigh overwhelming. And the School had made him, too! He was an unbearable brat when he came,—now he was graduating *cum laude*, and the School was a better place for his having been in it during the previous two years. A fury of self-righteous indignation surged up within me, that almost led me to drive him from the study. But heaven was with me and I managed to laugh.

Then, simply and truthfully, I told him the story of my life. It is hard to think that I shall never know whether he believed me or not. Certainly he did not believe that anyone could find his

## THE BOY TODAY

greatest joy in helping others. It was beyond belief. What a world some of them live in!

The next time I met him it was Easter morning, and I was on my way to chapel.

"X . . . .," said I, "last night as I thought over what I was going to say to you fellows in chapel this morning, the one idea that flashed through my mind was this: Although what I am going to say is, as far as I know, the absolute truth, X . . . .'s comment will be 'Bolony!' "

I expected a laugh, but I did not get it.

"Well, Doctor," the boy replied seriously, "we shall see!" In my soul I am afraid he *did* say "Bolony!" Yet I was absolutely sincere, as far as my mortal understanding went, in what I said to my boys that Easter Day.

Yes, it is most necessary to be sincere

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with this modern boy. If he doubts your sincerity when you are sincere, what will he do if he finds out you are trying to deceive him?

For this reason we must, all of us who wish to make him, yes, all of us, parents and teachers alike, live up to what we preach, to what we say. After all, that is the real way to get him—by *living*. If you speak fair words and are yet yourself equivocating, you lose him. If you inveigh against smoking, say, and he sees you smoke, you lose him. If you wrong him in any way, yet are too proud or afraid to apologize to him and tell him your fault, you lose him. And the terrible thing about it all is, that if you lose him, usually you lose him for good. He never forgets or forgives a teacher for a failure. He is a hero-worshipper, although you may not think it—a critical hero-worshipper. It is not a case of “the

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King can do no wrong,”—with him: it is a case of “Can it be possible that he really is what he says he is? If so I follow him, if not”—— If not, God help us and him!

### THE HEAD MASTER AND THE BOY

HE LOOKS very small when he first comes in and stands before me.

“Twelve years old?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Did you not know that you could not leave your house for the village in the morning?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Why did you do it then?”

He thinks for a moment, before replying, while I watch him.

“Because I wanted to.”

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"You always do what you want to?"

Again he paused—"Most times."

I laugh. The blood begins to come back to his face. One of the vexing perquisites of my office is the fear the youngsters have of me. I once summoned a small boy to my study to praise him for leading his class. When he came in, his fear had reached such a pitch that as he opened my door he burst into tears! When they become older and know me better, they laughingly tell me of their early fears. How that when the dread summons "to the presence" came, immediately all their wrong-doings for weeks previous stood out hideously before them. Even to the very end of their school course, there is for some of them, always that seemingly unbreakable barrier, the Head Master.

Poor Head Master! If only the Boy knew their Master's tremendous desire

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to help, his fear of saying the wrong word, his terror of acting unjustly, his overwhelming sense of responsibility for each and every one of them! But the Boy will never know. He will never understand. A good thing perhaps, for if he understood the true purpose of the Head Master, what advantage would he not take of his knowledge! The greatest of all living Head Masters in this country once said to me, "Yes, you must love your boys, but you must *never* let them know you love them." The eternal paradox of boyhood! Each one so different, yet all appearing and acting as if they were all alike.

Some of them never get over this fear of the Head Master, and look upon him as a tyrant whose chief object it is to make objectionable rules, and one's life a burden. However, this number is a comparatively small group, and is mostly

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composed of "bad actors" or malcontents who have reason for their fear.

Then there is another company of those who wish to get something—"bootlickers," they are dubbed by the School. They are a nuisance for two reasons, first because they are sometimes hard to find out, and a man hates to be made a fool of; secondly, and most disastrous, because the fear of being dubbed a "bootlicker" keeps from the Head Master those who really want to come and consult him, and bring their troubles to him.

Apart from these two groups, the fearful and the bootlicking, stands the rest of the School, and the only difficulty that lies in the way of a complete knowledge of each one is the lack of time. For this reason the Head Master comes to know most intimately only those who require discipline. Well, they need him most!



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Moreover, I have a confession to make: I believe that the boy who is mischievous, who ofttimes needs discipline, is going to be hereafter the boy who is going to do greater things than the uniformly "good" boy.

It is a great battle and a continuous fight to win a boy—harder than ever before during the last few years—but once won, the energy and internal upheaval which made him do that which you did not like, are turned to making him that for which you long.

But it is a hard, patient struggle and there are many disappointments. Ah, those disappointments! It is not the hard work, the long, weary hours that kill a Head Master, but the disappointments. A maker of steel, if he puts his whole heart and soul into the job, turns out good steel; but a schoolmaster may devote himself whole-heartedly to his

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boys, year after year, and yet fail and quite often fail badly. In the building of character there are so many outside elements, so many external substances that may creep in to ruin the good blue steel of character.

Quite unknown to me one of our greatest physicians once was present at a morning talk I gave the boys. Afterwards, he came into my study.

"That was a much needed speech you made before the boys this morning," he remarked.

I laughed. "I did not know you were present," I replied.

He smiled back. "I am glad you didn't," he returned. "But all the time I could not help thinking that one of these modern dance parties in our great cities would undo, in a few minutes, all the good done by a hundred such talks!"

A nice blow for a maker of steel! For

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this man knew, if any man did, what he was talking about, and it would not do to print the rest of what he told me.

How closely bound we are to one another. Youth unfortunately does not realize this tie. The modern boy is really the most tenderhearted of any that I have had to deal with, yet he thinks that he can fail if he will, and be the only one to suffer. Little does he know of how the day grows dark, of the self-accusation, of the terrible disappointment of those that love him when they find out about the failure. You think, perhaps he does not care? No, he would care if he knew; the trouble is that, brought up from the cradle to think only of himself, *he does not know.*

The hardest group to deal with are those who need very little help, as far as we can see. These are the great majority. Coming from good homes and

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good mothers, these boys are the delight of their masters. They cause very little trouble in class, they do what they are told, and in a well run school they are not much "up against it." At least, so it seems. A Head Master in his too-busy life usually passes these by. Here is a great mistake. Just as in nature the most beautiful thing is ever in the greatest danger—the finest rose, for instance, needs the greatest care—so in boyhood, the highest need our best help.

It was long before I realized this. Indeed the realization came to me only after some altogether unbelievable disappointments in after-life of some of our best products. This class is very hard to get at because of the very fact of its goodness. Such a Boy is so much with one in everything that one believes in, that it is hard to detect the flaw that will in time, perhaps, destroy the whole. In

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fact, he seems already made before coming to school.

Then there is the direct opposite—the boy who seems to live with little or no good in him. Always a danger to his community, he is the most difficult problem because while you are trying to get at him, his evil influence may harm others. A famous English Head Master has given as his best advice to a new Head Master the following:

“First and foremost: get rid of your bad boys;

Secondly: get rid of your bad boys;

Lastly and most importantly: get rid of your bad boys.”

And yet—if one only had the time to find out the reason for the badness! For I believe that a boy is naturally good, and always do I feel when compelled to send a boy away, that I have failed as much as he—failed because I have not been

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able to discover the reason for his badness.

It is amazing how little care is taken of youth, even in this day, in such matters as bad eyesight, bad tonsils, etc. Our doctors find all sorts of disorders in the first physical examination of those sent to us apparently sound in health. So many things such as these lead to character trouble. Poison of any kind physical or spiritual affects the system and the outlook on life. Moreover, I have seen many almost miraculous changes in character when the poison has been removed.

After all, evil is nothing else but poison—physical, moral, or spiritual. It is the duty of all of us, therefore, parents, teachers, doctors and the state, to seek the cause of the poison and eliminate it.

So far as I can see, the greatest necessity for the Boy today is to remove from

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him as far as possible all those poisons which endanger his life both here and hereafter. To do this, requires a second necessity on our part, and that is to practice an art we Americans have almost forgotten, the name of which is *self-sacrifice*.

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